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New image. New direction. Same philosophy.



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Same philosophy.

Founded in 1986 by a small group of visionary entrepreneurs, Ubisoft has grown to employ nearly 2,000 professionals in 22 countries around the world. Together they represent the industry's second largest internal creative force and it is their unique talent and creative potential, combined with Ubisoft's clear vision, that enables the company to deliver leading, massively successful interactive entertainment to an established – and continually growing – global audience.

In its 17-year history, Ubisoft's position has never been stronger. At a time when risk-averse publishing is rapidly becoming the convention, the company is proud to buck the trend by producing innovative, player-focused videogames. The line-up you'll witness over the next few pages is as diverse as it is promising and when combined with the recent corporate rebranding it becomes a clear demonstration of intent. Facing an increasingly competitive market place, Ubisoft remains determined and backed by such innovative and genre-leading software it is ready – indeed eager – to move forward. It is keen to deliver these superlative experiences to a wider audience while never losing sight of its players' needs.

Ubisoft's commitment to the core business strategy that has proved so successful remains as resolute as the company's admirable tradition of quality over quantity.

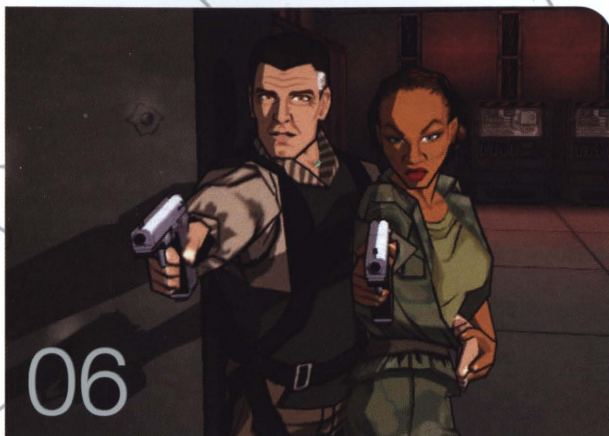




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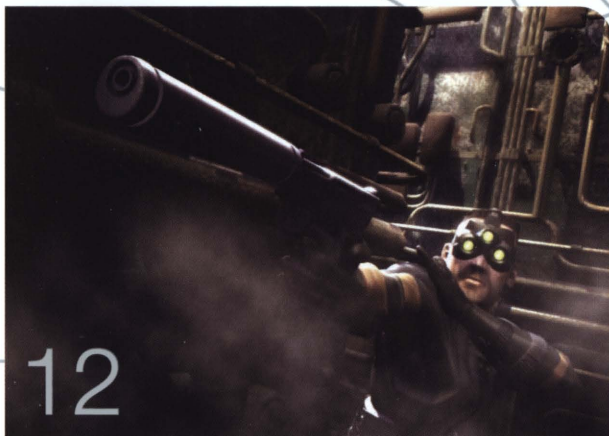
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Prince of Persia

The Sands of Time™

(PS2, PC, GBA)

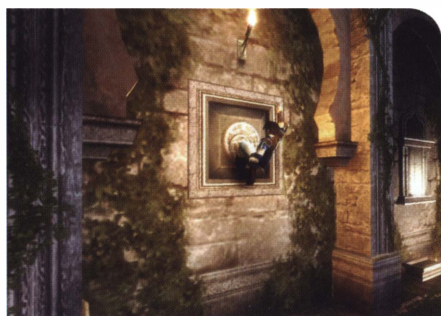
Ask people what they remember of Jordan Mechner's legendary *Prince of Persia*®, and they're likely to say one of two things: animation or death. Before its debut no one had seen a sprite animated with such incredible fluidity and character. But it was this beautiful liveliness that made it all the more devastating when your own incompetence landed him splayed on bloodied spikes.

For the update Ubisoft Montreal has kept the emphasis on the beauty of human movement. This means two things: lavish animation and instinctive, flexible controls. The vast array of manoeuvres the Prince has at his disposal is controlled through a combination of just two buttons. The precision of the analogue sticks and the context sensitive nature of the commands allows you to run along a wall, spring off at right angles to grab a flagpole, swing up into a handstand and flick round through 180 degrees before allowing your momentum to carry you across to a tiny



ledge without any hesitation or anxiety. The challenge is always grounded in 'what route shall I take to get up there?' not 'what button combo do I press to make that jump?'

As for death, the sands of the game's subtitle have rendered it less certain. The Prince has accidentally unleashed the Sands of Time, which whip through the inhabitants of the palace like a magical sandstorm and turn everyone they touch into a golden-eyed zombie. The Prince soon realises that the only way to kill the immaculately dressed undead is to use the dagger to forcibly retrieve the sand that has infected them. But as more sand returns to the dagger, he finds he can use it to control time. Most usefully, it allows him to 'rewind' the last ten seconds of play at any point (for as long as he has enough sand – it does run out), meaning that you can go back in time and retry that fatally botched jump. Time can also be speeded or slowed, a crucial skill for negotiating the game's trademark blades and



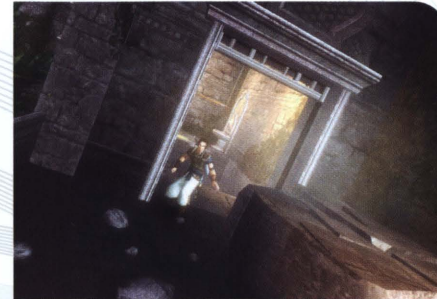
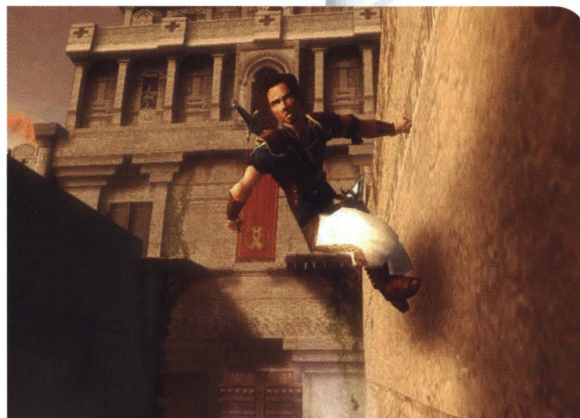
A legend from videogaming's past returns. More agile, more acrobatic and looking more determined than before, the Prince is back in a dazzling and intense update of the original to remind players the world over what adventure gaming is all about



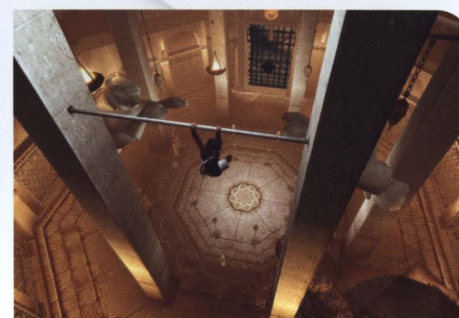
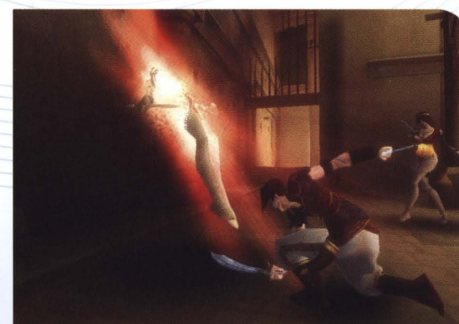
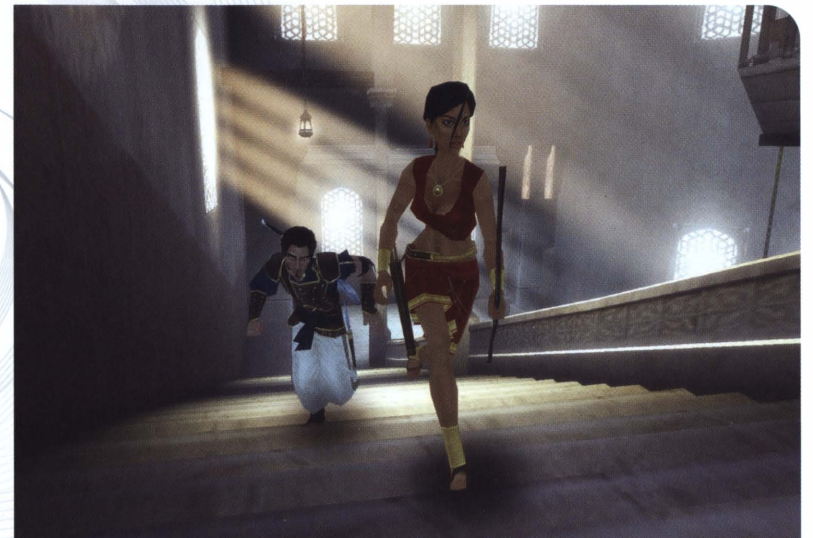
spikes while a 'Sand Vision' mode also allows for an insightful glimpse of the future and proves particularly useful for puzzle solving or route mapping.

Fighting the zombies provides the game's most dramatic visual moments. Rather than encountering a constant dribble of enemies throughout the game's corridors and halls, the game's pacing is controlled by interspersing gymnastic challenges, spatial puzzles and extended brawls. (In a neat touch, the Prince's appearance changes throughout the game to reflect his adventure.) Enemies can be felled with the Prince's sword, but will rise again and again if not finished with the magical dagger – and where one finally falls, another frequently rises in his place. It makes for intense, inventive battles which justify the air of steely satisfaction with which he returns his sword to its scabbard.

So what will people remember of this latest *Prince of Persia*? Time will tell but it's already looking like a game unlikely to be easily forgotten.



The exceptional beauty of *Prince of Persia* is as impressive as anything yet achieved on the PlayStation2, and hinges throughout on the contrast between the gold of the sand and the blue of the water



Once upon a time...

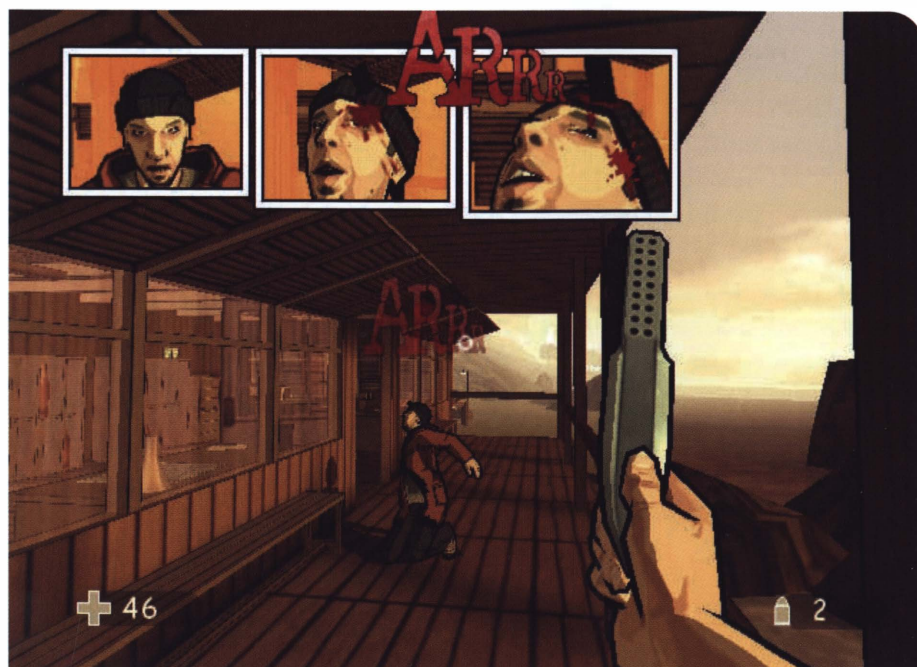
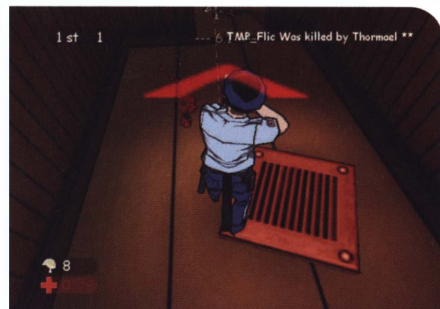
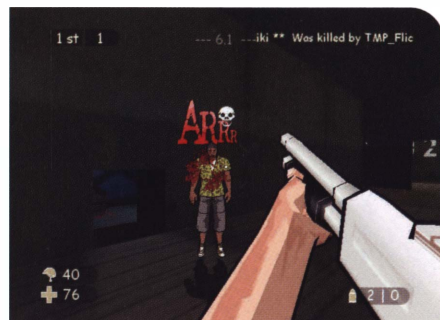


Jordan Mechner created *Prince of Persia* in 1989. For the time it proved a revelation, both in terms of structure and technology (the game's Rotoscopia technique produced animation that was thought impossible until then). For this update, Mechner has been worked with Ubisoft on a consultancy basis. While involved at various levels with all main areas of the game, his input has focused on uniting the title's gameplay and story elements and his experience as screenwriter and filmmaker has resulted in one of the strongest game narratives of recent times. Of course, elegance, attention to detail, and great game design also feature throughout.

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XIII™

(Xbox, PS2, GC, PC)

I imagine waking up on a beach to find a pretty 'Baywatch' type displaying a look of real concern and enquiring about your welfare. She suggests you follow her to the lifeguard cabin but you've barely taken three steps when a passing helicopter triggers a flashback event involving you, a boat, several gun-toting men and a frightening



number of bullets. The last thing you remember is going overboard...

So at least you know how you've ended up face down on the sand. You just don't know who you are or what you were doing on that hostile craft. Nevertheless, turns out the president of the US has been assassinated, determined attempts on your life seem worryingly frequent and the number 'XIII' is clearly tattooed on your collarbone.

Revealing the game's central theme of mass conspiracy, and how you fit within it, forms part of your ultimate goal. The other part is the typical aspiration of getting to see the end sequence. Along the way the flashback sequences continue to help you piece the various elements of your past together. During these plot revelations, player control is maintained but they're also an opportunity for the more inquisitive gamer to obtain extra plot-related information – just one of XIII's many great innovative touches.

Refreshingly, fresh characteristics are a recurring theme throughout the game. As well as the exquisite cel-shaded graphics, which deliver the appropriate graphic novel presentation with remarkable aplomb, the game is packed full of stylish visual elements (particularly distinctive are the comic book-style pop-up windows that help depict action sequences). This approach serves more than just an aesthetically pleasing purpose, though – in terms of gameplay, it allows for some interesting novel approaches. For instance, if you stand still XIII's 'sixth sense' comes into play. In essence, it acts as a radar, with the location of nearby enemies given away by helpful visual cues.



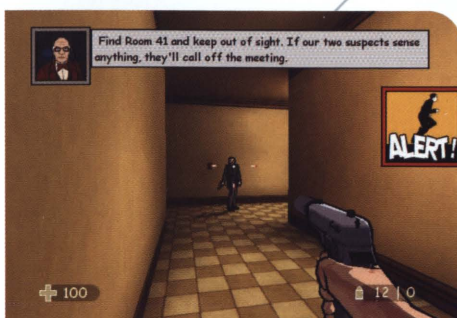
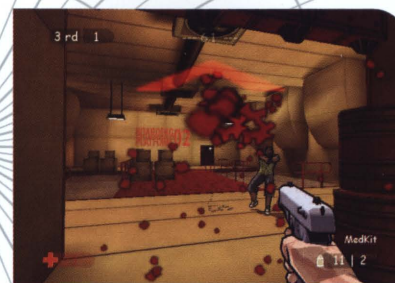
One of the most visually arresting FPS titles to date, Jean Van Hamme's graphic novel comes to life courtesy of Unreal II engine technology. Backed by a unique narrative, Ubisoft's XIII promises to take the interactive experience to a new dimension



The game also employs other, equally unorthodox, methods. You can use an enemy's body absorb incoming bullets and because of your character's (assumed) past military training, everyday objects such as bottles, ashtrays and even chairs can be used as effective weapons. Of course, a more traditional selection is also offered: throwing knives, a crossbow, shotgun, M16, Beretta, AK-47, Uzi and (FPS favourite) sniper rifle – just some of the extensive and lethal armament at your disposal.

Control-wise, everything feels particularly intuitive. While XIII has a variety of abilities (from lock-picking to picking up non-lethal objects) the game's context-sensitive, icon-driven mechanic ensures interaction with your environment is smooth and decisive – an important aspect considering how frequently your life is in danger.

Uniquely stylish, uncommonly accomplished and packing plenty of originality, XIII looks set on significantly invigorating the tired action/stealth FPS genre.



You won't have seen another FPS that looks like this. But XIII's unique visual style – like all of the game's many clever aspects – has significant game dynamic implications

Multiple multiplayer



The main difference between the various formats comes down to individual, exclusive multiplayer options: the PS2 has a total of five play modes (online as well as two player splitscreen); the Xbox supports the console's Live service for up to eight player action (as well as offline four player splitscreen); the PC handles up to eight players per map, too, but also offers gamers the ability to create their own levels; while GameCube owners have a four player splitscreen option to keep them occupied.

Beyond Good & Evil™

(PS2, PC)

Don't be fooled by appearances. The vast planet of Hyllis may look peaceful but the smell of conspiracy is rife. A recent clash with a relentless alien invasion has left Hyllian reporter, Jade, tormented by agonising visions. Her intuition leads her to suspect her government's claims of a secure planet, and spurred by a rebel organisation she sets off to uncover the truth.

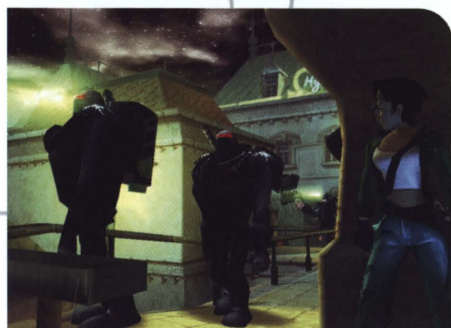
As ever, the truth isn't as obvious as it first may seem and in her search for the truth Jade is plunged into a mysterious adventure filled with peril. She soon discovers why she is uniquely suited to save her people from the government's diet of tyranny and corruption, and also that nothing is ever what it first seems...

Which is exactly what you could say about the game. Labelling it as an adventure is to do it a disservice – the game crams an entire universe into a CD. The concept behind this is to allow the player to feel like they have complete freedom, going off to planets, visit their towns,

descend into their mines, climb their mountains and generally get a sense of limitless exploration.

This sense of the removal of the barriers that have typically imprisoned gamers is further extended into the game style itself. *Beyond Good & Evil* utilises a powerful, specifically built engine that offers its developer unusual levels of versatility. It's been designed to encourage the team to attempt ambitious ideas that would otherwise prove too intimidating and its ability to adapt to any style of gameplay – foot, vehicle, or vessel-based exploration, for instance – further reinforces the developer's confidence to push the traditional boundaries of the genre.

One area where it's already ahead has to be character design but this isn't so surprising once you look at the development team's attributes. As diverse a group of individuals as you'll find in videogame production, the 30-strong team is made up of people from a variety of backgrounds. Some have worked on



Imagine a peaceful, beautifully coloured world populated by friendly, aesthetically extravagant creatures. Now imagine a government so corrupt that it's willing to sacrifice the whole planet. You'd want to stop this, wouldn't you? Over to you, then...

cartoons and comic books, some have been involved in film production, some are self-taught, while others are old-skool coders. It's a successful mix – the level of characterisation in *Beyond Good & Evil* is of the highest standard, with the game's uniquely stylised protagonists displaying an uncommon level of realism (or at least as realistic as, say, a talking pig can be). The game's bosses, for instance, are truly intimidating, their decidedly generous proportions adding to the presence already powerfully established by their menacing design. All characters are genuinely expressive, however, with their faces capable of conveying the emotion that perfectly matches the proficient work of the voiceover artists.

Currently, this is one of the most ambitious games around. Full of delightful touches, it offers a gaming experience more diverse than anything else within its genre, wrapped up in a delicately crafted world.



The game engine is one of the most versatile yet made but in addition critical elements of the engines were optimised for each console so as to fully exploit their individual abilities. The result is one of the most beautiful games to have appeared, with a rewarding and unique graphical style



Saint Michel



Beyond Good & Evil is produced by Michel Ancel, the creator of the phenomenally successful *Rayman* series. Born in 1972 in Monaco, he was as a child fond of the Russian, Chinese and Japanese fairy tales that were read to him, an influence he's carried through to his creations. As a teenager he was utterly enthralled by the early videogames, so much so that he taught himself to program and began creating puzzle titles. Winning a competition for young game designers brought him in contact with Ubisoft which he joined in 1989, aged 17, as an independent graphic designer. He then created the *Rayman* character... The rest, as they say, is history.



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Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six® 3 (Xbox)

Rainbow Six veterans will know Ding Chavez well. The central protagonist in *Tom Clancy* titles, Chavez returns at the head of Team Rainbow for another tricky covert mission.

Fear not, you won't be going in alone. In singleplayer mode three loyal AI operatives obey your every command. Over 40 of these instructions exist and are communicated either via an intuitive control menu or via the Xbox Live headset courtesy of the game's impressive voice recognition element (if it's atmosphere you're after, the latter adds an extra layer of reality and as such becomes the preferable option).

Suitably, the game's structure reflects the immediacy of direct voice control. There is no pre-planning and all of your missions are carried out on the fly, with objectives being given out in checkpoint-style succession by your CO. However, it's worth pointing out that an aspect of the series' traditional strategic elements remains, notably in the manner in which you



manage your team but as the game has been redesigned for Xbox it remains eminently playable. While their behaviour is impressively realistic, displaying the capacity for intelligent positioning and convincing environment negotiation at all times (indeed, it's a testament to their authenticity that upon embarking on your first mission you soon develop a genuine sense of camaraderie rather than the usual nannyng sentiment so often evoked by traditional squad control), ultimately they rely on you for guidance thus ensuring tactical aspects remain very much at the heart of the game. It doesn't take long to realise that only by fully exploiting the considerable abilities of your squad members can you guarantee your survival.

Of course, you can rely on human support, too. All singleplayer missions are playable by up to four players via system link, either as co-op sorties or 'Terrorist Hunt' mode while multiplayer maps deliver up to 16 player team-based deathmatch fun (Xbox Live or system link).

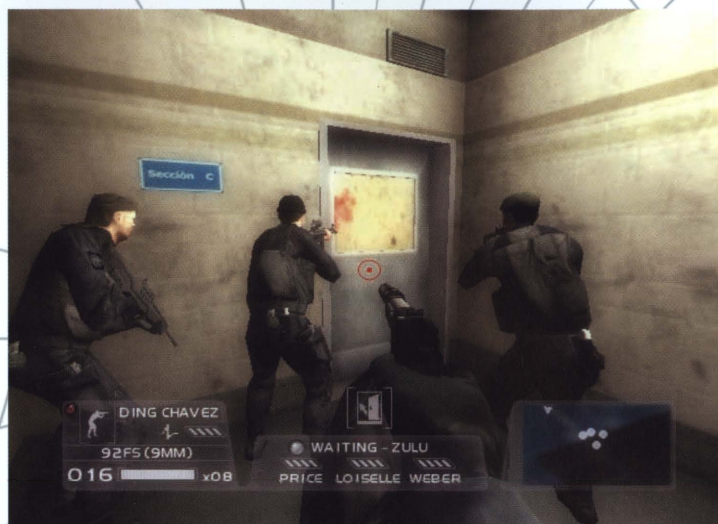
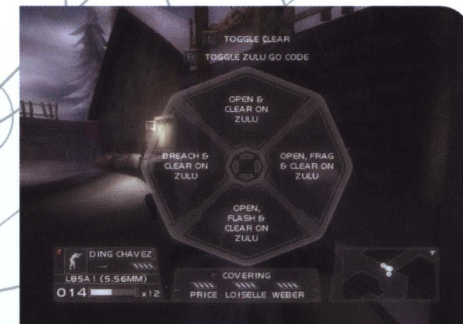


Yet again, terror rains on peace's sunny parade, forcing Team Rainbow to come out for the series' richest covert operation to date. Pleasantly, it's a thoroughly engrossing affair, offering a level of immersion rarely encountered in this type of videogame

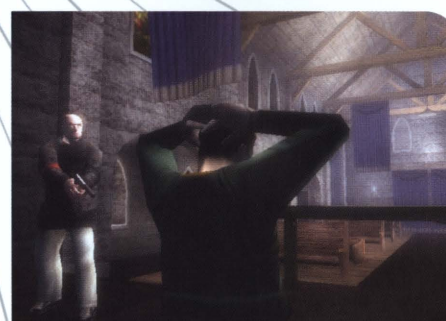
Regardless of which play mode you choose, one particular aspect of *Rainbow Six 3* remains constant: visually, it's one of the finest *Tom Clancy* games yet. The lighting and shadow effects have been entirely reworked and now offer a further level of realism; the thermal and night vision options are utterly convincing; objects (such as chains) react authentically to physical interaction; the soft body dynamic of an enemy's frame heightens the already lofty sense of immersion... it's an uncommonly engrossing package, perhaps encapsulated most poignantly in-game by the careless action of standing too close to a detonating flash grenade.

The levels themselves are competently constructed, affording a variety of tactical approaches to the precarious situations you face and – thankfully, given the intensity of the firefights – also include a generous amount of objects that provide much needed cover.

The pinnacle of the *Rainbow Six* series, this latest instalment is sure to enthrall all who play it.



The game offers 14 singleplayer missions and nine multiplayer maps based on both out- and indoor environments. In total, 30 weapons are at your disposal and the 16 minutes of cut-scenes are the result of Hollywood director Marco Brambilla's input



Sound check



In stereo, the sound in *Rainbow Six 3* is great. In Dolby Digital 5.1, it's fabulous. From the authentic sound of the weapons to the way the reverb level always perfectly defines the surroundings, everything in the gameworld appears to display the expected acoustic signature and as such massively enriches the player's visual cues – *Rainbow Six 3*'s audio is utterly convincing. But it's also informative: you can place enemies by listening out for their footsteps, or wait until you hear them reloading and only then rise from the safety of the crate you've hidden behind to eliminate them. It's delightfully atmospheric stuff.



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Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell®: Pandora Tomorrow

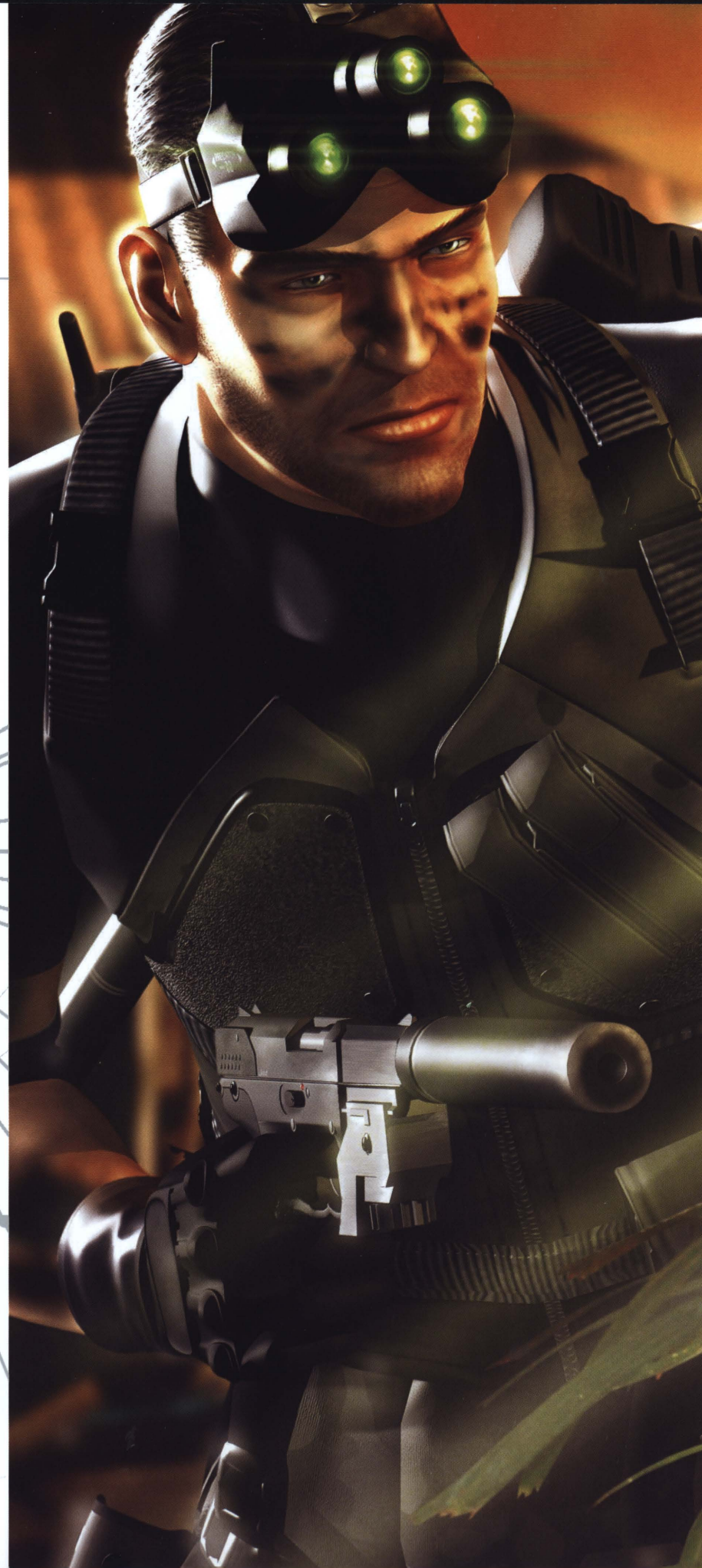
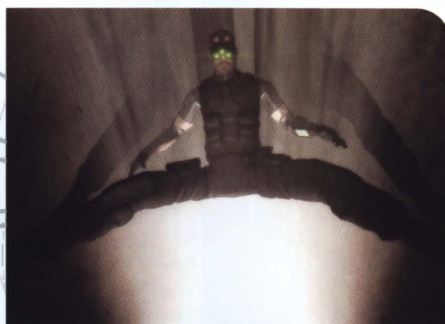
(Xbox, PS2, PC, GC)

Like the original *Splinter Cell*, *Pandora Tomorrow* is a stealth action adventure. It takes place after the events of first game and again features covert specialist Sam Fisher as he embarks on another lone mission to save the world. While at present the exact locations his latest adventure will take him to are undisclosed, progression through the game is expected to take a more open-ended approach as well as introduce a variety of new elements for Fisher to face (one example are daytime maps featuring civilians going about their daily routine – who must not be alerted to your presence – and should prove one of several interesting new challenge opportunities).

The major addition affecting the previous game's core mechanic, however, is the inclusion of online multiplayer support. This is a significant change for the series but one that should bring with it tremendous gameplay potential. The development team is currently experimenting with a number of different play modes

but the core elements of the singleplayer game remain. So expect the light and shadow dynamic, Fisher's acrobatic style and ingenious gadgetry to feature prominently. But as Sam Fisher works alone, expect also a new storyline for the multiplayer aspect, one that sees the NSA experimenting with small units for infiltration operations. In practice this translates to team-based gameplay and while details have yet to be confirmed, co-op play featuring timed actions or actions that require the input of several operatives is just one of the many superb touches that are expected.

Also looking to make it into the game are the kind of improvements you expect from sequels as developers get increasingly comfortable exploiting hardware capabilities. New moves – both stealth and combat – are currently being developed and as with every other aspect of the game their final implementation depends on the delicate balance between reality and player enjoyment.

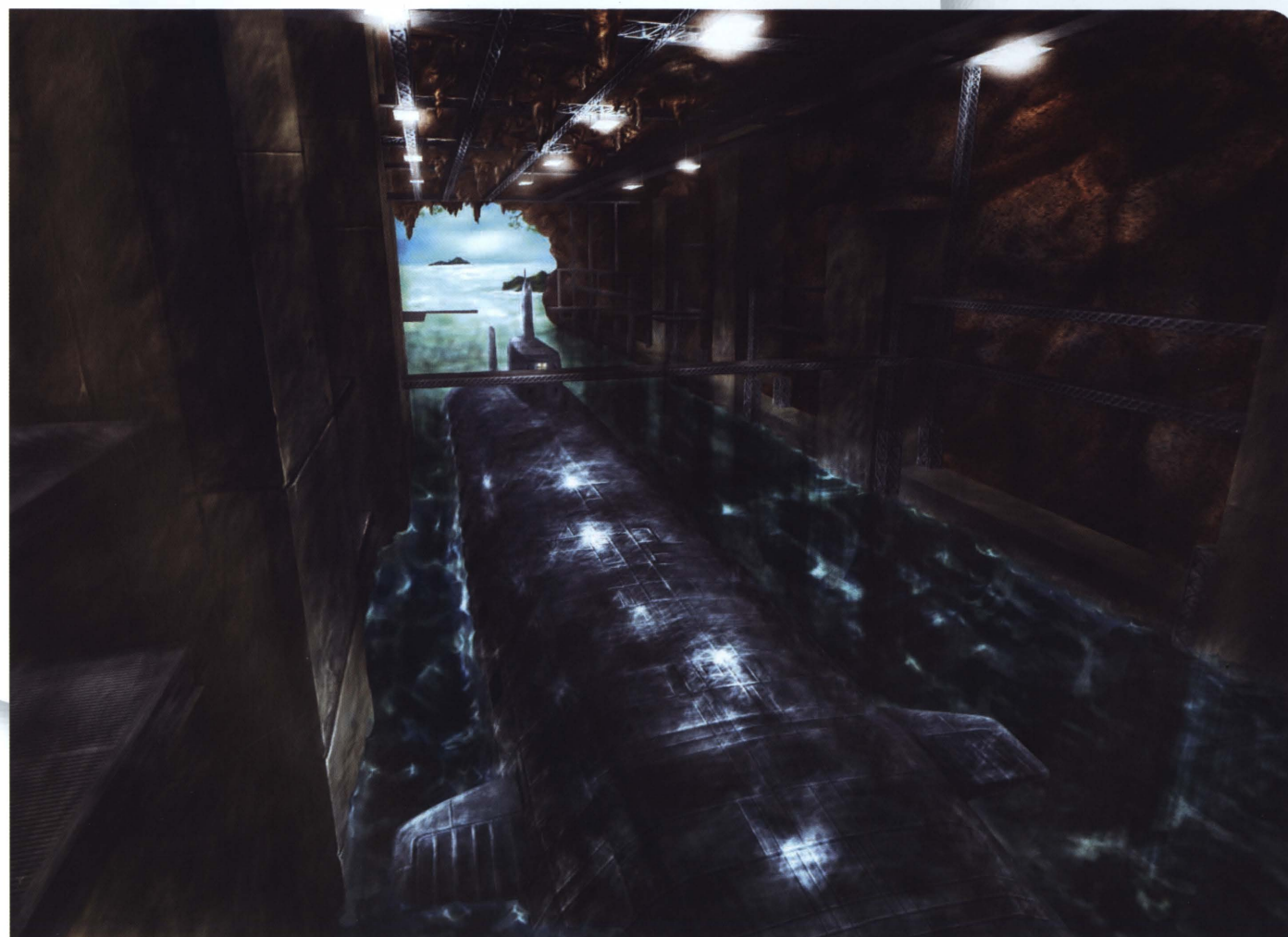


The next episode of Third Echelon, the NSA's top secret black ops division, Pandora Tomorrow features all of the elements that made the original Splinter Cell a worldwide success but improves on every area – graphics, gadgets and, of course, gameplay

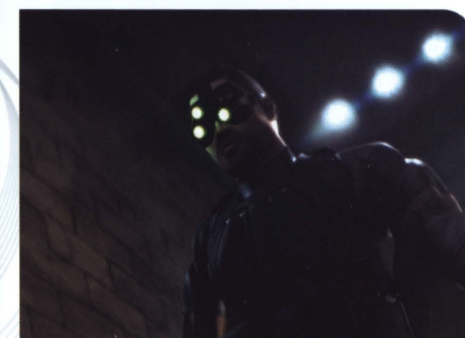
Another element still retaining some basis on reality is the equipment available to you ingame. Clearly Fisher's work wouldn't be possible without gadgets and for this sequel the team has included a number of intriguing new hi-tech prototypes (still unavailable for military use).

Backing up these enhancements on a technical level is the game's engine. In order to support the multiplayer aspects this has undergone an obvious reworking but the advantages are evident elsewhere. New visual effects are now possible as well as an increase in the number of NPCs seen throughout the game, which heightens the game's already strong sense of authenticity.

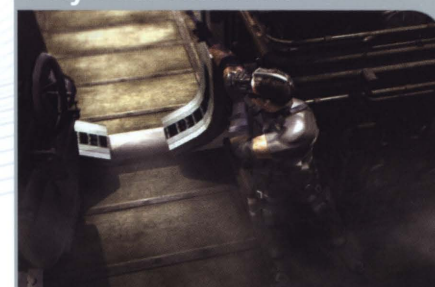
Indeed, the series' continual strive for creating an engaging gaming experience set within a reality-influenced environment has typically resulted in a genre-leading level of immersion. Its second instalment carries on the tradition while delivering an adventure that's even more ambitious – both in scale and playability.



For this sequel the development team has worked hard to enhance the already impressively realistic graphical look of the first game. Expect a remarkable level of immersion



Physical mission



Through a better use of the game engine for Tom Clancy's *Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow* the developer has been able to consider hitherto impossible levels of authenticity provided they fulfil the series' criteria for the implementation of new features. As you would expect these guidelines maintain that any addition to the feature list must ensure that its inclusion guarantees an improvement of the game experience.

Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon™: Island Thunder™ (Xbox)

Xbox owners looking to continue the excellent experience offered by *Ghost Recon* now can, thanks to this standalone campaign disc (the first of its type for Microsoft's console).

As you'd expect, the game supports the Xbox Live service and therefore offers eight multiplayer maps set in desert, city and jungle environments taken from the PC versions of *Island Thunder* and *Desert Siege*. In addition, four player-favourite maps from the Xbox version of *Ghost Recon* are also included. A number of new modes of play are now offered, bringing the total number to a very healthy, very varied dozen.

Of course, it's not all online play: an eight-mission singleplayer campaign set in scenic Cuba is offered and proves as addictive as previous *Ghost Recon* ventures. The sense of being part of the battlefield is again beautifully and convincingly conveyed, while the action remains just as wonderfully intense. Similarly, the environments are recreated to the same realistic standards and with the same attention to detail as previous *Recon* titles.

Venturing online is advisable, however, as future exclusive downloadable content such as new missions and maps will soon be made available to *Island Thunder* owners thus furthering the longevity of an already accomplished and rewarding package.



Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon™: Jungle Storm™ (PS2)

Specifically designed and exclusively available for Sony's 128bit platform, *Jungle Storm* sends the Ghosts into the Colombian forest to hunt down a deadly drug cartel. Set in 2009, this takes the form of an eight-mission campaign and in singleplayer mode represents 50 per cent of the game: a further eight-mission operation in post-Castro Cuba also awaits you.

So does the game's online component. The first online *Ghost Recon* title for the PS2 encapsulates everything that made its predecessor the Xbox Live game of choice but has been purposely tailored to exploit the capabilities of its host hardware. In total, an impressive 31 multiplayer maps are available offering 10 modes of play (three of them new). Voice communication – a critical aspect of the *GR* experience – has been fully implemented, meaning you can chat to your online team members or, when in singleplayer, instinctively control your AI squad.

As a final reminder that this latest adventure from the *Ghost Recon* is to benefit from console-specific development, the interface and controls have been streamlined to reflect the design elements of the DualShock2 pad. Ultimately, the only aspect it shares with its predecessors is the utterly captivating nature of the gameplay.



Far Cry™

(PC)

The trouble with paradisiacal tropical islands is that, occasionally, they hide gangs of morally-challenged, deadly mercenaries planning a hideous outcome for humanity. Predictably, as the only one aware of their plan it becomes your responsibility to eliminate the threat before you can sit back and enjoy the otherwise idyllic setting.

Indeed, *Far Cry*'s environments are so authentically detailed – their white sandy beaches and water so inviting and their forests so relaxing – that it's difficult to believe evil could reside within them. Get spotted by an adversary, however, and before you know it reality is sinking its Teflon-coated fangs in your torso. Or, depending on the accuracy of your enemy, your head. In *Far Cry*, careful and considered negotiation of the environment is essential – mercenaries roam freely and thanks to advanced AI they pose a genuine threat. Their behaviour is unpredictable but adaptive, essentially guaranteeing that no two games are ever the same.

Thankfully, the game's 800-metre scalable view system offers you the opportunity to determine their position first. Having stored your motion-sensing binoculars away you can then opt for a sniper rifle or, if you're feeling brave, attempt a close range attack with one of the less accurate but fully automatic weapons.

The game takes place over several islands (and if you wish, you can even swim from one to the other), each offering its own set of challenges but all sharing the qualities that set this game apart from other firstperson action shooters. Both technically (from Polybump™ character mapping to floating body dynamics) and in terms of gameplay (destructible terrain, high-end AI, and vehicle operation, to name but three), *Far Cry*'s impressive elements combine to deliver one of the most captivating experiences of this kind currently around.

Furthermore, it represents the perfect embodiment of its publisher's new drive towards an increasingly mature, more mainstream audience while simultaneously retaining its usual firm grip on standards of quality.

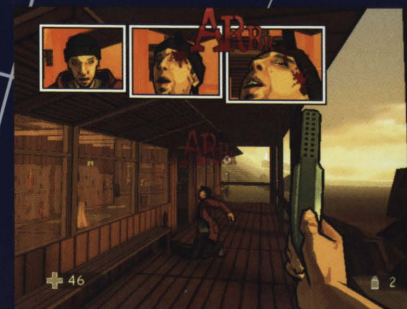


As you might expect from a game this detailed, the vehicles in *Far Cry* are fully interactive – you can drive a jeep around the island (without ever losing your shooting ability) and even fly a hang-glider, to name but two examples.





Prince of Persia The Sands of Time™



XIII™



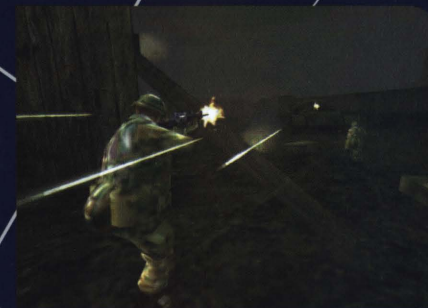
Beyond Good & Evil™



Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six® 3



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Far Cry™



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